game environments

Special Issue

**Current Key Perspectives
in Video Gaming and Religion.**

by
Gregory Grieve,
Kerstin Radde-Antweiler,
and Xenia Zeiler

Issue 03 (2015)

articles

Current Key Perspectives in Video Gaming and Religion: Theses by Michael Waltemathe.

by Michael Waltemathe, 50

Current Key Perspectives in Video Gaming and Religion: Theses by Xenia Zeiler.

by Xenia Zeiler, 53

Current Key Perspectives in Video Gaming and Religion: Response by Michael Houseman.

by Michael Houseman, 61

Transcript File

(71-138)

Audio File

Current Key Perspectives in Video Gaming and Religion: Theses by Ian Bogost.

Ian Bogost

How should religious study concern itself with video games?

There are many possible answers, of course, but the most important perspective religious study can bring to games is that of ritual and habit, rather than spirituality or belief. Religious behavior isn't exactly akin to in-game behavior, but games share with religion and religious belief: the establishment of patterns and behaviors, rules and customs. Like religion, games create habits, habits by which one lives inside the game/faith – but also outside it. In some sense, the ultimate goal of games and religions is to create a place for the practice of particular habits. The context and scope of those habits is meant to be limited inside the game/ritual/spiritual practice, but games and religions alike also hope to expand the purview of their boundaries to include greater portions of the individual's life context.

What methods and research questions do you recommend?

What are the habits or practices that game(s) demand or encourage? How do those habits or practices relate among players or between players and non-players? What is the process of reproduction of the habits in the game? Outside it? What are the implications of pursuing the game's habits? What happens when those habits are pushed to their limits?

Do scholars have to play a game to analyze it?

Yes, but with substantial flexibility. Any object meant to be subject to any kind of analysis needs to be understood by the researcher. But exactly what method or process, or which aspects of the thing in question are relevant to research depends on the context.